



## REPORT TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM NO. VIB

HPC MEETING: 07/27/2009

July 27, 2009

FROM: KEITH BERGTHOLD, Interim Director  
Planning and Development Department

APPROVED BY

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

THROUGH: DARRELL UNRUH, Planning Manager *DU*  
Secretary, Historic Preservation Commission

BY: KARANA HATTERSLEY-DRAYTON *KHD*  
Historic Preservation Project Manager

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND MAKE FINDINGS ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE DUSAN MISITA FARM  
LOCATED AT 2458 S. MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARD (PLAN AMENDMENT  
A-08-007 AND REZONE A-08-034) TO THE CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL  
RESOURCES AND FRESNO'S LOCAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC RESOURCES.

### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission review the attached Historic Architecture Survey Report and hold a public hearing. Staff further recommends that the Commission find that the Dusan Misita Farm meets the threshold for eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 and 3 and to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources under Criteria i and iii.

### BACKGROUND

Plan Amendment Application No. A-08-007 and Rezone Application No. R-08-034 have been submitted to the City of Fresno's Planning and Development Department for a proposed 116-acre mixed use project located at the northwest corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Jensen Avenue. The property is currently located in the County of Fresno and will require annexation to the City of Fresno. Within this 116 acres are several buildings and complexes that would potentially be removed to facilitate the project. One approximate 2-acre parcel contains a 100-year-old farm complex consisting of a farmhouse, tankhouse (with attached residence), barn and numerous outbuildings. Because of the age of the buildings a historic survey was prepared by City staff pursuant to Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA guidelines and in compliance with Fresno's demolition review policies.

The farm is located within Lot 37 of the Fresno Colony, an agricultural colony immediately south of the city and developed in 1880 by Thomas E. Hughes. The colony system was perfected in the Fresno area and provided 20-40 acre parcels, usually irrigated and occasionally planted in vineyards or fruit trees, to farmers from around the United States and Europe. By 1903 there were 48 separate colonies or tracts in Fresno County representing approximately 71,080 acres. These colonies helped to break up the vast estates and initiated what agricultural historian Donald Pisani has termed "the horticultural small-farm phase" of California agriculture.

The first property owner identified for this parcel was H.S. Dixon, presumably Harry St. John Dixon (and father of the artist Maynard Dixon) who is depicted on the 1891 atlas. The buildings, however, are associated with Lazar Tomo Misita who acquired the property c1898. Misita was born in Herzegovina in 1867 and came to California in 1888. He relocated to Fresno in the 1890s and began to farm.

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The Misita Farm complex appears to be eligible to the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1, as a rare example of an agricultural Colony farm and for its association with one immigrant family, the Misitas. In addition, the buildings are of great interest as an excellent example of rural vernacular building with the tankhouse, in particular, of special importance. The property also appears to be eligible to the Local Register of Historic Resources under Criteria i and iii.

Attachments: Exhibit A - Historic Architecture Survey Report For Plan Amendment A-08-007 and Rezone A-08-034 Prepared by Karana Hattersley-Drayton M.A. for the City of Fresno's Planning and Development Department, July 2009.  
Exhibit B- Criteria for Listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

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## Office of Historic Preservation

### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Registration Programs

National Register

California Points of  
Historical Interest

### California Register

The State Historical Resources Commission has designed this program for use by state and local agencies, private groups and citizens to identify, evaluate, register and protect California's historical resources. The Register is the authoritative guide to the state's significant historical and archeological resources.

The California Register program encourages public recognition and protection of architectural, historical, archeological and cultural significance, identifies historical resources for state and local planning purposes, determines eligibility for state preservation grant funding and affords certain protections under the California Environmental Quality Act.

#### Criteria for Designation

- Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States (Criterion 1).
- Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history (Criterion 2).
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic value (Criterion 3).
- Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistoric history of the local area, California or the nation (Criterion 4).

#### Effects of Designation

- Limited protection: Environmental review may be required under CEQA if project is threatened by a project. Contact your local planning agency for more information.
- Local building inspector must grant code alternatives provided under State Building Code.
- Local assessor may enter into contract with property owner for property tax (Mills Act).

Owner may place his or her own plaque or marker at the site of the resource.